more than a crore people including fifty lakh tribal people. So, may I know whether the Government would consider the proposal to recognise that language for the purpose of imparting education in primary stages ?

Mr. Speaker: No, this is not allowed.

Shri Hannan Mollah: Sir the question is regarding the medium of instruction in Mother Tongue in tribal areas. As we are aware, many of the tribal languages are spoken, but they have no script. Sir, you are also aware that in West Bengal.....

Mr. Speaker: Please put the question, because there are many others also who want to put question.

Shri Hannan Mollah: For Alchiki in West Bengal and Kokborg in Tripura, scripts have been developed and those scripts are also introduced in West Bengal and Tripura. May I know in how many States, with the help of the Central Government, an attempt is being made to develop the tribal language and to develop the script of the language ?

Mr. Speaker: This is disallowed.

(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: This is not relevant. Q. No. 185.

(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: Q. No. 186.

(Interruptions)

An Hon. Member: Sir, the hon. Minister has already given the answer for Q. No. 185. (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: That question was not put. I am going to the next question. That question was not put. Q. No. 186, Shri Madan Lal Khurana.

Aids Through Common Needle to Test Malaria

***186. Shri Madan Lal Khurana:** Will the Minister of Health and Family Welfare be pleased to state:

(a) whether proper safeguards are not observed to check the spread of AIDS through the common needle used to prick the fingers of the persons to carry out tests for Malaria in the C.G.H.S. dispensaries and elsewhere in that the needle is not sterilised; and

(b) if so, the measures taken in this regard ?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Shrimati D. K. Tharadevi Siddhartha): (a) and (b): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

At present, Malaria workers deployed to work for purposes of malaria control by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi/New Delhi Municipal Committee, in Central Government Health Scheme dispensaries use a special needle (lancet) for pricking the finger to take blood smear. Disinfection is done by immersing the needle in cotton soaked spirit. In the rural areas blood smears are taken by multi-purpose health workers. A special needle is used for taking blood smears and spirit is used for disinfection.

The Directorate General of Health Services has issued instructions recently regarding the sterilisation methods to be adopted by Malaria workers working in Central Government Health Scheme dispensaries and to the Directorate of Health Services in the State/Union Territories.

[*Translation*]

Shri Madan Lal Khurana: Mr. Speaker, Sir, reply has been given about the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and New Delhi Municipal Committee only whereas I have asked the question about the whole country and not about Delhi only.

I would like to know whether the Ministry has received complaints that a common needle is used for taking the blood from professional donors

such as rickshaw pullers and other poor people. The actual problem is that the poor and the unemployed persons have become professional blood donors in the absence of any means of livelihood. So they earn money by selling their blood. The blood taken from such blood donors is generally infected with various diseases which are passed on to other people through that infected blood. You have stated in your reply that instructions have been issued in this regard. My specific question is that during the last one year, how many complaints to this effect have been received from all over the country and the number of those out of them found genuine ? Has any enquiry been conducted into the complaints so received ? What action has been taken by the Government in this regard ? What steps the Government propose to take to check the problems arising due to the professional blood donors ?

[*English*]

The Minister of Health and Family Welfare (Shri M. L. Fotedar): I do not know whether I shall reply in Hindi or in Urdu.

[*Translation*]

I would like to tell the hon. Member, that we have not received any complaint about the spread of AIDS or Diabetes through the common needle used for pricking the fingers of the persons. But it is true that some complaints have been received regarding the use of the common needle to take blood for test by the malaria-workers in the field. It may have some adverse effects. The Directorate General of Health Services has issued instructions regarding the use of the needle. He has issued instructions that one needle should be used at a time on one person. He has also listed precautions to be taken, if it is to be used on another person.

Shri Madan Lal Khurana: Mr. Speaker, Sir, instructions have been issued that one needle should be used on one person only, but what is the target of the Government regarding giving injections to the children and Malaria infected persons during one year and whether adequate number of needles have been provided for the purpose. I want to say that the target has been fixed for giving injections to one lakh persons, but actually a few hundred or one thousand needles are provided for the purpose. If the adequate number of needles are not provided, it means that a common needle would be used for giving injections to many persons. Mr. Speaker, Sir, my another question has also not been replied to. A common needle is used to prick the fingers of the persons to carry out blood-tests. (*Interruptions*). Therefore, what is the target of the Government regarding providing more needles, so that a single needle is not used again to carry out tests ?

[*English*]

Shri M. L. Fotedar: Sir Hon. Member has not directy asked whether one needle is used on the AIDS patient or HIV patient. He has specifically asked whether proper safeguards are not observed to check the spread of AIDS through the common needle used for pricking the fingers of the persons. So, this is not a test which is intravenous. When we take the blood, we do not take it by intravenous method.

You have asked the question about the blood which we take from the finger; whether we are taking any sufficient safeguards for that or not. I have said that for that purpose, we have issued necessary instructions because it has come to our notice that a common needle should not be used. In case it is used, then, these are the precautions which should be applied. That is number one.

Secondy, it has aso been suggested that we must use disposable needles for one person. You are correctly saying that, but the disposable needle costs about Rs. 2. It will be very difficult for us to provide Rs. 2 cost per needle for testing the blood of one

person by taking only blood from the finger. So, that is the second question.

Shri Bhogendra Jha: Can't the needle be disinfected before bringing into use again ?

Shri M. L. Fotedar: Yes, I am just telling you. If you want the instructions, WHO has reported that if we use common needle, then, there is a danger that this may lead to HIV or the AIDS. They have issued certain instructions. We have taken note of these instructions. We have issued instructions to all the CGHS dispensaries in Delhi. And we have written to all Directors of Medical Services in all the States to take sufficient precautions.

If you want, I can lay on the Table of the House, the instructions that we have issued to different medical institutions in this regard.

So far as HIV is concerned, I must tell you that blood is taken through the needle by the intravenous method. That is not this thing. I am told that we require about 80 million needles per year. Eighty million needles mean we require Rs. 160 million for only testing the blood of the finger.

So far as the HIV tests are concerned, for that, we have taken sufficient precautions that there should be no infection due to the AIDS.

Dr. Ram Chandra Dome: Mr. Speaker, Sir, many a time during needle prieks, particularly during examination of the hepatitis patients when blood is drawn by intravenous method, disposal syringe and needle is essential. Hepatitis is a fatal disease which gets transmitted to others and causes fatility. Sir, my specific question is whether or not the Government equips the CGHS dispensaries and hospitals to treat the hepatitis patients and whether adequate preventive measures and arangements are made for disposable syringes and needles or not. Are the common patients getting the facilities as those of the VIPs in this regard ?

Mr. Speaker: He has already answered this question. He has said that in certain cases needles are given and in certain other cases, instructions which are given are followed.

Dr. Ram Chandra Dome: Sir, that is not the reply.

Mr. Speaker: Probably, you did not pay attention when he replied.

Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee: Sir, in particular, he is asking about hepatitis and disposable needles.

Mr. Speaker: This is a question relating to Malaria.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr. Speaker: Not like this. You are taking the time of other Members. Shri Dau Dayal Joshi.

[*Translation*]

Shri Dau Dayal Joshi: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member Shri Khurana has asked a specific question, regarding the number of needles provided to the rural health workers. How much is the demand and how many are actually supplied ?

Mr. Speaker: The question has already been replied to.

Shri Dau Dayal Joshi: Answer has only been given regarding the demand, that is, 1 crore and 72 lakh needles are needed. But the question is whether the supply is made according to the demand ? I would like to say that to test the blood group whether it is positive or negative, the disposable needles are provided by your department, in the urban areas, but they are not provided to the rural health workers, as a result of which accurate results are not received. Regarding the present instruction given by the hon. Minister, whether proper arrangements will be made in this regard and whether the supply will be made as per the demand ?

[*English*]

Shri M. L. Fotedar: I may tell the hon. Member—Mr. Khurana and all of us also konw it very well—that health is basically a State subject. We provide only the funds and the necessary guidelines. So far as the needles are concerned, disposable needles are not provided and I have said that it is due to financial constraints. So, due to financial constraints, it will not be possible for us to provide disposable needles for testing malaria. (*Interruptions*).

[*Translation*]

Shri Dau Dayal Joshi: How it should be used in the villages. (*Interruptions*).

Shri M. L. Fotedar: The needle should be sterilized and then used to test the other person. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Dau Dayal Joshi: Needles are not available in the villages, these are not provided. (*Interruptions*).

Shri M. L. Fotedar: Sterilization means that the needle should be boiled in water for 20 minutes and then that needle should be used on another person. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Dau Dayal Joshi: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Malaria is spreading. It cannot be checked. (*Interruptions*).

Shri M. L. Fotedar: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to remove this impression of the hon. Member that "Malaria is spreading". It is not spreading, but has been controlled to a great extent. (*Interruptions*).

[*English*]

Forest Fires

*188. **Shri Krishan Dutt Sultanpuri:** Will the Minister of **Environment and Forests** be pleased to state:

(a) the names of States where cases of forest fires were reported during the last two years; and

(b) the estimated loss of forest wealth resulting from these fires?

The Minister of State of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (Shri Kamal Nath): (a) and (b) The occurrence of forest fire has been reported by Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal during 1989-90. The details for the last two years are being ascertained from the States and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[*Translation*]

Shri Krishan Dutt Sultanpuri: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether any assistance has been sought by the hill states such as Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim for the loss suffered by these States in forest fires.

Shri Kamal Nath: Mr. Speaker, Sir, no information has been received from the Himachal Pradesh Government in this regard during the last two years. I have the figures of 1988-89 with me. In the year 1988-89, Himachal Pradesh was the worst affected state. Nearly 24,070 hectare of land was affected by forest fires. We have not received the figures pertaining to the last two years. We have asked them to furnish the figures.

Shri Krishan Dutt Sultanpuri: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the date from which BJP has come into power in Himachal Pradesh. (*Interruptions*).

Is it a fact that the BJP Government has not taken suitable action to control these forest fires and a number of forests in Himachal Pradesh have been destroyed in fire. The State Government has tried to implement the policy of "Van lagao—Roji Kamao". I would like to knew whether the Government is going to get this matter investigated through the CBI or at the Central level that the actual forest belt in Himachal Pradesh has been totally denuded this year and the Corporation has incurred loss in crores of rupees as a result thereof. Are you going to write to Himachal Pradesh?